Fun Facts!
About New Jersey’s Maritime History

1) New Jersey was almost called the “Maritime State” instead of the “Garden State” according to NJ Governor Driscoll in his 1953 veto of a bill to put the words “Garden State” on each NJ license plate.

2) New Jersey is home to Governor William Newell who initiated what would become the United States Life Saving Service in 1871 and the United States Coast Guard in 1915. The anti-immigrant member of the No Nothing Party is credited for developing the Beach Apparatus Drill that saved over 177,000 lives — ironically, many of whom were immigrants.

3) Joseph Francis Life-Car was invented and demonstrated in New Jersey. The original car used in the 1850 wreck of the Ayrshire off “Squan Beach” became one of the top ten exhibits at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC.

4) Ocean Going wooden ships (including 4 masted schooners) were built in small towns up and down the Jersey Shore.

5) Henry Hudson and the Dutch in the Half Moon explored the Jersey Shore from Cape May to Sandy Hook in 1609.

6) The Jersey Shore was home to Revolutionary Privateers who attacked larger British merchant ships sailing along the Jersey coast.

7) In October 1778, the British Navy launched a major attack to remove the “Nest of Rebel Pirates” in the Little Egg Harbor (Mullica) River.

8) Charcoal made from NJ Pinelands trees was shipped to British-held New York City during the Revolutionary War in small “whale-boats.” It was shipped to Bermuda and the Bahamas to make salt for the British Navy through the early 1800’s.

9) Box cars full of clams and oysters were shipped from the Jersey Shore to Campbell’s Soup in Camden, NJ to make soups and chowders shipped round the world.

10) Rum runners and US Revenue Service and the US Coast Guard engaged in a cat and mouse competition to bring foreign-made alcohol from ocean going ships to the coast during Prohibition (1919-1933).

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12) The Spanish may have been the first Europeans to attempt settlement of what is now New Jersey — the 1525 voyage of Quejo sent by Ayllon northward received reports of coastline from as far north as the Deer River (may have been the Hudson River).

13) Hoboken was the departure point for most American troops headed to France for World War I — “Heaven, Hell or Hoboken” was a common saying of Dough Boys of the American Expeditionary Forces.

14) There are over 4,800 shipwrecks in the waters along the New Jersey coast focused on the Atlantic Ocean, Delaware Bay and Delaware River.

15) The Delaware River flows 419 miles from New York’s Catskill Mountains into the Delaware Bay.

16) The Jersey Shore along the Atlantic Ocean runs 141 miles from Perth Amboy to Cape May Point.

17) At the height of the Delaware Bay’s oyster industry there were just under 600 schooners and sloops working the industry.

18) The Port of Cape May/Wildwood is the largest fishing port in New Jersey and one of the largest on the East Coast.

19) At the end of World War II, the German submarine U-586 surrendered to a task-group from the US Atlantic Fleet just off Cape May on May 14, 1945.

20) John Philip Holland of Patterson and Simon Lake of Pleasantsville competed with each other to build the first submarines for the US Navy.

21) Absecon Lighthouse is the tallest lighthouse in New Jersey at 171 feet.

22) The Morris Canal connected Phillipsburg with Jersey City for 102 miles and went through 1,674 feet of elevation changes. The trip took 5 days to transport coal from the Lehigh Valley, farm products, goods and other materials.

23) Sandy Hook Lighthouse is the oldest working lighthouse in the United States. It was built in 1764.

24) The Delaware and Raritan Canal that ran from Bordentown to New Brunswick was large enough to accommodate canal boats, sail boats, steam tugs towing barges, freight boats, yachts and naval vessels.


What’s the tallest lighthouse in New Jersey? #21
What’s the name of NJ’s Official Tall Ship? #26
How many shipwrecks are along the NJ coast? #14

The New Jersey Maritime Alliance (NJMA) is an unincorporated collaboration and campaign started by the Bayshore Center at Bivalve (BCB) to connect New Jersey residents and visitors with appreciation for the state that is surrounded by water and a rich maritime history.

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New Jersey’s Rich Maritime History

**Atlantic County**
- Atlantic City Historical Museum
- Cape May Lighthouse
- Hereford Inlet Lighthouse
- Museum of Cape May County
- National Aviary Station
- Ocean City Historical Museum
- Sea Isle City Historical Museum

**Bergen County**
- Bergen County Historical Society
- Canaheim Manor
- Eberhard Mansion & Glass Factory
- Great Neck Lighthouse
- Harrington House Museum
- Hackensack Post Museum
- Hackensack River Museum
- New Milford Historical Society
- Old Bergen Museum

**Burlington County**
- Burlington County Historical Society
- East Jersey Lighthouse
- Rice-Lockwood-Millner House

**Camden County**
- Camden County Historical Society
- Camden Museum of Art
- History of Camden County
- Merchant's Exchange Building

**Cape May County**
- Cape May Lighthouse
- Hereford Inlet Lighthouse
- Liberty State Park
- Margarette Historic Site
- Stone Harbor Lighthouse

**Cumberland County**
- Bayshore Center at Bivalve
- Delaware Bay Museum
- East Point Lighthouse
- John Dulsas Maritime Museum
- Maurice River Township Heritage Society
- Maurice River Village

**Essex County**
- Newark Museum
- Newark Waterfront
- Newark waterfront

**Gloucester County**
- Gloucester County Historical Society
- Historic Cold Spring Village
- Jersey City Historical Society

**Hudson County**
- Central Railroad of New Jersey
- East Orange Lighthouse
- Historic Grange Hall
- Old Bergen County Courthouse

**Mercer County**
- Lambertville Station
- New Jersey State Museum
- Trenton Central Railroad

**Middlesex County**
- East Jersey Old Town
- Madison Township Historical Museum
- Metter-Bidone House Museum
- National Museum of American History

**Monmouth County**
- Atlantic Highlands
- Red Bank Historical Society
- Sandy Hook Lighthouse

**Ocean County**
- Barnegat Light Station
- Barnegat Lighthouse
- Beach Haven Lighthouse
- Historic Cold Spring Village

**Passaic County**
- Paterson Museum
- Wayne Museum

**Saline County**
- Finns Point Lighthouse
- Supansea NR

**Somerset County**
- Millstone Valley
- National Scenic Byway

**Sussex County**
- Delaware Lighthouse Keepers
- Friends of the Lighthouse

**Atlantic City**
- Atlantic City Historical Museum

**Bergen County**
- Bergen County Historical Society

**Camden County**
- Camden County Historical Society

**Cape May County**
- Cape May Lighthouse

**Essex County**
- Essex County Historical Society

**Gloucester County**
- Gloucester County Historical Society

**Hudson County**
- Hudson County Historical Society

**Mercer County**
- Mercer County Historical Society

**Middlesex County**
- East Jersey Old Town

**Monmouth County**
- Atlantic Highlands

**Ocean County**
- Barnegat Light

**Paterson**
- Paterson Museum

**Supansea**
- Supansea NR

**Trenton**
- Trenton Historical Society

**Wayne**
- Wayne Museum

**Wildwood**
- National Scenic Byway

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